

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of peace. I am joined in that by nearly 100,000 people who have signed a petition urging Congress to stop the escalation of the war in Afghanistan. This is the petition from the group Rethink Afghanistan.

President Obama has decided to send more than 30,000 extra troops to Afghanistan at a cost of more than \$100 billion a year, but America cannot afford a war that does not make us safer; and Congress has the power to stop that escalation. Vote "no" on any spending bill that would send more troops to Afghanistan.

I agree with that petition. It took only about 1,000 Special Forces troops to overthrow the Taliban in 2001. Why would we need 100 times that many to keep them out now? This occupation is an 18th-century strategy against a 14th-century enemy.

We have done enough to help and secure the Pashtuns, the Tajiks and the Hazara. It's about time we start to think of ourselves. Instead of spending billions on the war, we need to spend it on America. End the war now.

DEMOCRATS ARE COMMITTED TO JOBS PROGRAM

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, after nearly a decade of handing over middle class tax dollars to the wealthiest 1 percent, after nearly a decade of policy that encouraged million-dollar CEO bonuses over raises for American workers, we are witnessing the results of nearly a decade of complete Republican control of the Federal Government.

They handed President Obama and this Congress two wars, hundreds of billions of dollars in debt, crumbling national infrastructure, a home mortgage crisis—one in eight mortgages in default or foreclosure—a global climate crisis, and a financial sector ravaged by greed and lax regulation.

In short, this greatest economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression should be called the "Republican recession." And then, they handed it all off to President Obama and now have the audacity to ask, Where are the jobs? Well, the jobs are coming. The jobs are being built right now because Democrats are focusing on jobs. Democrats are committed to a jobs program that talks about our infrastructure, retaining public employees, and building America's future again.

WE NEED TO HELP THE UNEMPLOYED

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, The New York Times and CBS released a poll re-

cently that showed what the feelings are and the effects of unemployment on Americans. We've had 10 percent unemployment and many people that are long-term unemployed. The effects are devastating.

People who are unemployed are more likely not to have health insurance and have difficulty and give up getting medical care. That costs the public later with emergency room visits and costs us more money. They have more problems with depression and anxiety, and yet can't afford medical treatment. Again, problems arise. They have lost their homes, neighborhoods suffer, crime increases, neighborhood values decrease.

The loss of jobs has hurt millions of Americans and others because of the effects on the economy, on government, and on neighborhoods. But the people who have lost their jobs know why they have lost their jobs. Twenty-six percent specifically say the reason they've lost their jobs is because of President Bush and the policies that were brought about during the time he was President. That is obvious. The second largest group is Wall Street bankers. We need to help the unemployed. We need to find jobs.

WALL STREET REFORM PACKAGE

(Mr. WALZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, among the speakers who have just addressed this House are a high school teacher, a nurse, a social worker, a small business owner, and a criminal prosecutor. And they stood hand in hand for working families on Main Street to restore responsibility and accountability to Wall Street last week.

After years of recklessness and unchecked greed that have now cost millions their jobs, their homes, and their life savings, we finally passed long-overdue commonsense reforms. These reforms protect investors and consumers from the excesses of those who will gamble other people's hard-earned money and closed loopholes in existing laws. They bring about an end to taxpayer bailouts and a belief that a firm is too big to fail.

Financial markets work best when they are transparent, allowing investors to make smart decisions and our capital system to flourish; but they also require cops on the beat to protect consumers from fraud and abuse. The Wall Street reform package we passed strengthens our markets and our economies, giving people confidence again to invest in America and our growth towards prosperity.

□ 1045

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DRIEHAUS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule

XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

AUTHORITY TO CONVERT CERTAIN OVERSEAS LIMITED APPOINTMENTS TO PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1517) to allow certain U.S. Customs and Border Protection employees who serve under an overseas limited appointment for at least 2 years, and whose service is rated fully successful or higher throughout that time, to be converted to a permanent appointment in the competitive service, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1517

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

(2) the term "U.S. Customs and Border Protection" means U.S. Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security;

(3) the term "competitive service" has the meaning given such term by section 2102 of title 5, United States Code; and

(4) the term "overseas limited appointment" means an appointment under—

(A) subpart B of part 301 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on January 1, 2008; or

(B) any similar antecedent or succeeding authority, as determined by the Commissioner.

SEC. 2. AUTHORITY TO CONVERT CERTAIN OVERSEAS LIMITED APPOINTMENTS TO PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service, the Commissioner may convert an employee serving under an overseas limited appointment within U.S. Customs and Border Protection to a permanent appointment in the competitive service within U.S. Customs and Border Protection, if—

(1) as of the time of conversion, the employee has completed at least 2 years of current continuous service under 1 or more overseas limited appointments; and

(2) the employee's performance has, throughout the period of continuous service referred to in paragraph (1), been rated at least fully successful or the equivalent. An employee whose appointment is converted under the preceding sentence acquires competitive status upon conversion.

(b) INDEMNIFICATION AND PRIVILEGES.—

(1) INDEMNIFICATION.—The United States shall, in the case of any individual whose appointment is converted under subsection (a), indemnify and hold such individual harmless from any claim arising from any event, act, or omission—

(A) that arises from the exercise of such individual's official duties, including by reason